

friends to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers and to gather at the Seder table to eat special foods, offer prayers, and sing songs that celebrate their rich heritage, the power of faith, and the eternal blessings of liberty.

The story of the Exodus, as found in the Scriptures, is timeless and universal. More than 3,000 years ago, the children of Abraham learned of our Creator's love and mercy as they reaffirmed man's natural desire for liberty. Every year since then, Jews remember the miracles that led their ancestors out of bondage and to the Promised Land.

As the international community works to face great challenges and embrace important opportunities, the United States remains committed to peace, justice, and opportunity. During this time of great consequence, we resolve to bring about a rebirth of freedom and promise in troubled regions around the world.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a Happy Passover. We also hope the holy season will bring a renewal of faith, comfort, and hope for all.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of Easter 2003

April 17, 2003

I send greetings to those observing Easter. Easter is the most important event of the Christian faith, when people around the world join together with family and friends to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the hope of life to come.

For Christians, the life and death of Jesus are the ultimate expressions of love, and the supreme demonstrations of God's mercy, faithfulness, and redemption. Since Christ's miraculous Resurrection on Easter, more than 2,000 years ago, Christians have expressed joy and gratitude for this wondrous sacrifice and for God's promise of freedom for the oppressed, healing for the broken-hearted, and salvation.

Though this year's observance comes at a time when our world faces many challenges, the message of Easter remains unchanged—though sorrow may last through the night, joy comes in the morning. This holiday comforts us, as we remember that suffering will pass and goodness will prevail.

This Easter season, join me in praying for peace, wisdom, and resolve. During this holy time, may Christ's example of love and sacrifice compel us towards justice and compassion, and renew us with an assurance of hope and everlasting joy.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a Happy Easter.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on Authority To Hold Harmless and Indemnify in Certain Circumstances Under One Contract

April 17, 2003

Memorandum for the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

Subject: Authority to Hold Harmless and Indemnify in Certain Circumstances Under One Contract

1. You are authorized for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to exercise authority under Public Law 85-804, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*), to the same extent and subject to the same conditions and limitations as the head of a department or agency listed in section 21 of Executive Order 10789 of November 14, 1958, as amended, with respect to one contract identified in subparagraph (a) of this memorandum and solely for the purpose identified in subparagraph (b).

- (a) The contract is for repair and reconstruction in Iraq and is awarded on or before September 30, 2003.
- (b) The purpose is to hold harmless and indemnify with respect to claims, losses, or damage arising out of or resulting from exposure, in the course of performance of the contract to which subparagraph (a) refers, to:

- (i) chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons, agents, or materials;
- (ii) land or sea mines or similar explosive devices; or
- (iii) unexploded ordnance.

2. The function performed by USAID in awarding the contract to which paragraph 1 refers is a function connected with the national defense. There are currently national emergencies that have been declared by the President in accordance with applicable law. I deem that the authorization provided by paragraph 1 and actions taken pursuant to that authorization would facilitate the national defense.

3. You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:33 a.m., April 18, 2003]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on April 21.

Proclamation 7665—National Park Week, 2003

April 18, 2003

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America is a land of majestic beauty, and we are blessed with immeasurable natural wealth. Americans are united in the belief that we must preserve this treasured heritage and conserve these natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people.

As a Nation, we can be proud of our diverse parklands, ranging from the rugged wilderness of snow-capped mountains, thick forests, sweeping desert sands, and remote canyons to national symbols such as the Statue of Liberty and the Lincoln Memorial. Our National Park Service has a long and important history. In 1864, the Federal Government ensured a grand natural landscape for generations to come when it designated Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias to be “held for public use, re-

sort, and recreation . . . inalienable for all time.” Eight years later in 1872, the Congress created the first national park in the Yellowstone region of the Territories of Montana and Wyoming. Finally, in 1916, the National Park Service was established to efficiently administer our growing number of parks, which today includes 388 national parks on more than 84 million acres of public lands. These lands continue to be cherished by all our citizens.

The full and safe enjoyment of our national parks depends on dedicated National Park Service employees and thousands of people who volunteer their time to conserve these sites. This year’s theme for National Park Week, “Celebrating Volunteers,” recognizes their valuable contributions to conserving and maintaining our natural, cultural, and historical heritage.

Across the country, my Administration is promoting volunteer service, encouraging public-private partnerships, and advocating community-based interest in our national parks. We are committed to ensuring that our land is conserved, our air is clean, our water is pure, and our parks are open and accessible to all Americans. Recently, my Administration re-launched Take Pride in America, a national partnership that engages volunteers from every corner of America to enhance our parks and other public lands. As part of the USA Freedom Corps initiative, Take Pride in America will encourage more Americans to take part in volunteer service opportunities available on public lands.

My Administration has also supported improvements in park management and is working to reduce the park maintenance backlog. My fiscal year 2004 budget includes over \$1 billion to reduce the maintenance backlog, an increase of \$180 million over last year’s request, along with \$76 million, a \$9 million increase over last year’s request, for the National Park Service Natural Resource Challenge to monitor “vital signs” of conditions in our parks. This initiative will help conserve native species and habitats, maintain our natural resources, eradicate invasive species, and provide the public with information about resources in our parks. In addition, my Administration has developed the website www.recreation.gov, which is a user-